

# Conference

## *Developing Policy in Different Cultural Contexts: Learning from Study, Learning from Experience*

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International conference *Developing Policy in Different Cultural Contexts: Learning from Study, Learning from Experience*, hosted by IPSA (International Political Science Association) Research Committee 32 on Public Policy and Public Administration in collaboration with Croatian partners (the Croatian Political Science Association, the Institute of Public Administration, the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Zagreb, and the University of Zagreb) and partners outside the region (the IPSA Research Committee 05 on Comparative Studies on Local Government and Politics, the Research Committee on Public Policy and Governance of the Russian Association for Political Science) was held on June 10-12, 2011 at Centre for Advanced Academic Studies (CAAS), University of Zagreb, Dubrovnik, Croatia<sup>1</sup>. The Conference gathered more than 60 professors, academic researchers and practitioners from 17 countries. The joint task was to review the state-of-the-art of policy knowledge and policy practices, mostly in the field of policy analysis, policy development, policy practices (Europeanization, policy making styles, policy studies in different sectors, recent trends in higher education) and policy analysis in local

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<sup>1</sup> Co-chairs of the Conference were Hal K. Colebatch, Chair of the IPSA Research Committee on Public Policy and Public Administration, Ivan Koprić, President of the Institute of Public Administration and Zdravko Petak, Member of the Executive Committee of the Croatian Political Science Association.

governance, to explore key participants and main problems in the policy work, as well as to see what can be learned and used from the comparison of experiences of policy practitioners and research-based policy knowledge. State reconstruction and public administration reform (PAR) policies were also discussed, focusing on decentralization, modernization of public administration, creation of the modern civil service, administrative education, reform practices in South-Eastern Europe, and general reform orientations.

Five thematically different streams (analytical/conceptual approach to policy; reforming public administration in South-Eastern Europe; policy practice in Europe; policy analysis in local governance; policy in relation to higher education) were being held in the course of three days, with two to five different panels in each of them. Each panel, lasting for an hour and a half, had a chairperson, two to four panelists and a discussant. The role of the latter was to analyse and comment the issues argued in the presentations held by the panellists and to ask them questions. After the panellists had responded to the questions, the auditorium commented or posed questions to them. During the conference 47 research papers were presented within 16 panels.

The Conference was opened with the *Analytical/ Conceptual* stream and its first panel was devoted to the conceptualization and review of practice of policy analysis in the policy process. Hal Colebatch (UNSW, Australia, and University of Twente, the Netherlands) presented the understanding of policy work emerging from tension between the search for a sophisticated technology of choice in the paradigm of instrumental rationality, and a 'puzzling' about the relationship of this technology to practice. While seeing policy process as a complex pattern of continuing activity involving a diverse assemblage of players and discourses, this conceptual development enabled a more complex and more informative analysis of the policy process, and placed 'policy analysis' as part of this process. Simona Kustec Lipicer (University of Ljubljana, Slovenia) elaborated on the current deliberative shift in and for everyday policy making in the Western Balkans while analyzing the practice of Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA). Regional RIA could be most appropriately described as an »apparent participatory dramaturgy«, predominantly internationally motivated and guided, with a rare reflection to the domestic needs and limited usage of policy analytical support. Nina Belyaeva (Higher School of Economics, Russia) assessed the role intellectuals play vis a vis power structures in defining and shaping up the policy process. The research in

three Russian regions provided empirical indicators to distinguish consultants from analysts as »independent policy actors« and revealed several categories of analysts acting as autonomous policy actors.

The first panel of the stream *PAR Policy* was named *Serving Citizens, not Politicians*. The presentations were held by Hellmut Wollmann (Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany), Snežana Đorđević (University of Belgrade, Serbia) and Dejan Milenković (University of Belgrade, Serbia). The emphasis of the panel was on institutional changes in the provision of public services under the influence of welfare state in the 1960s, of the entrepreneurial New Public Management doctrine during the 1980s, and of market liberalisation of the EU, by comparing German, French, Italian, British and Norwegian examples, and a case study of public enterprises in Belgrade. The principles of the European Administrative Space were analysed as a factor influencing public administration reforms in Serbia. During the discussion, it was pointed as a conclusion that no matter who provides public services (state, local government, or the market), public administration reforms should be citizen-driven, i.e. they should be in the public interest, and not just a result of pressures coming from the EU.

Panelists in the first panel of the stream *Policy Practice in Europe* were focused on the *Styles of Policy-Making and Policy Learning*, analyzing drivers and outcomes of the (de)centring governance processes. Ian Sanderson (Leeds Metropolitan University, the U.K.) in Post-Devolution Scotland recognized promising indications of 'intelligent policy making' and 'good government', but at the same time raised a dilemma if the emphasis on negotiation, consensus and the transparency of Scottish politics and evidence-based approach at the same time promote a cautious risk-averse approach that discourages policy innovation. Zdravko Petak and Anka Kekez Koštro (University of Zagreb, Croatia) argued the critical role of evidence-based approach for successful devolution policy while explaining the limited success of the Croatian (top-down) decentralization after 2001. Dario Nikić Čakar (University of Zagreb, Croatia) dealt with (de) concentration of power within the executive branch of government arguing that presidentialization of parties in parliamentary systems leads to strong centralization of the decision-making process within the executive, and the creation of de facto presidentialized system of government within an unchanged constitutional framework.

The first panel of the stream *Policy Analysis in Local Governance* dealt with »doing it right«: policy learning and policy-making at the local level. Jill Tao (University of Hawaii, the U.S.) compared the U.S. policy making

model to those of Japan and South Korea. The U.S. rulemaking model is »quite impressive on the paper« but in practice it resembles more to the East Asian model, although there are differences between enactment of decentralization of policymaking between the U.S. and East Asia. Harald Baldersheim and Jostein Askim (University of Oslo, Norway) emphasized three interrelated issues related to the role of local councillors as policy-makers and agenda-setters: three types of policy learning profiles (cosmopolitans, locals and party champions), influence of the profiles on councillors' role and emergence of a new type of leadership in local government caused by new patterns of policy learning.

In the first panel of the stream *Policy in Relation to Higher Education*, panellists analyzed the factors leading to success of failure of reforms and implementation of national higher education (HE) policies. Damiano De Rosa (University of Bologna, Italy), concerned with the implementation gap, argued the existence of two levels in the Italian HE policy: a formal one, which is apparently ready to change and is sensitive to the new ideas, and an informal one that makes it de facto impossible to implement any reform. While analyzing the factors impacting implementation of the Croatian HE policy, Vesna Kovač (University of Rijeka, Croatia) proposed a theoretical framework giving special attention to the position and activity of the main policy implementers in the field – university teachers (academics). Karin Doolan (Institute for Social Research, Zagreb, Croatia) dealt with the reconfiguration of the Croatian HE area arguing that government attentiveness to university autonomy, a more ambitious role for the Croatian higher education at both individual and societal levels that goes beyond market logic, stakeholder partnerships, increased investments in science and education, as well as policies addressing social inequalities and substantive local issues in higher education remain significant challenges for the Croatian HE system.

The second panel of the *Analytical/Conceptual* stream dealt with *Policy and Macro-Political Change*. Danica Fink Hafner (University of Ljubljana, Slovenia) argued that the cluster of post-communist countries involved in the latest wave of democratisation and European integration has predominantly been managed by Western countries and Western-dominated intergovernmental organisations. In this context, policy analysis proved to be a rather useful political tool in the dissemination of liberal capitalism, but due to its technocratic/ managerial use, it has failed to act as a successful tool for the promotion of democracy. The aspect that remains particularly underdeveloped is the compatibility of policy analysis with deliberative democracy. Yana Stoeva and Robert Hoppe (University of

Twente, the Netherlands) focused on conceptualization of the nature of eastward enlargement of the EU from a political-constructionist point of view. In a comparative case study of the accession of Bulgaria and Romania, Stoeva and Hoppe linked the concept of narrative, as a vehicle to construct European identities, to that of enlargement, showing how the EU ended up trapped in the rhetorical cage of its own founding myth and pan-European rhetoric of a membership open to any European state respecting its founding principles. Krešimir Petković (University of Zagreb, Croatia) explored policy analysis as discourse analysis in the context of Foucault's different types of functioning of political power. Using the example of Croatian penal policy to sketch out how Foucault's sovereign power works in shaping policy and molding policy discourse, Petković argued that in such circumstances, the only way a policy analyst can influence policy making is to become a political tactician, and engage in subverting instead of confronting, power in its own field of discourse.

In the second panel of the stream *Policy in Relation to Higher Education*, Fred A. Lazin (American University, Washington DC, the U.S. / Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Israel), Pero Maldini (University of Dubrovnik, Croatia) and Tihomir Žiljak (University of Zagreb, Croatia) examined recent trends and factors affecting higher education (HE) policies across the world. While providing a cross-national overview of educational policies, Lazin outlined worldwide direction of higher education: from opportunity-driven approach toward a market-driven strategy followed by a cutback in government financing, a decline in access and affirmative action, and replacement of public good with private responsibility for personal fulfilment. Individual's responsibility for personal fulfilment is also emphasised by the European Life Long Learning (LLL) concept whose impact on HE policy Žiljak analyzed, arguing that through adaptation of LLL the importance of learning is growing, but university has been increasingly prone to leave its internal constitutive logic and has become an instrument for political and economic objectives. The role of political objectives was of special concern for Maldini, who emphasized the dominance of government in setting up agendas for HE transformation policies in post-communist context.

In the second panel of the stream *Policy Analysis in Local Governance* panellists Veran Stančetić (National Liberal Network, Belgrade, Serbia), Romea Manojlović (University of Zagreb, Croatia), Daria Dubajić (University of Zagreb, Croatia) and Teo Giljević (Social Sciences Polytechnic, Zagreb, Croatia) analyzed various aspects of local self-government reform and territorial changes and decentralization process in Serbia, Greece,

Slovenia and France. The comparative approach has shown significant commonalities between the analyzed states: all of them are still highly centralized. The reform measures their governments have undertaken so far are still showing weak decentralization effects.

Panelists of the second panel of the stream *Policy Practice* in Europe searched for patterns of Europeanization and its impact on horizontal policy actors and stages of policy process. Igor Vidačak (Croatian Government, Office for Cooperation with NGOs, Croatia) explored rather divergent effects of Europeanization on the strength of interest groups in Croatia arguing that despite a number of EU driven opportunity structures, the involvement of interest groups in the agenda-setting phase of the policy process still remains limited. Rosa Sanchez Salgado (University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands), focusing on the implementation stage, analyzed the EU impact on civic organizations in France and Spain, showing that through its funding programs, the EU has contributed to the transfer of NPM principles among NGOs. That evolution might be interpreted as a progress leading to effective and complete action, but more attention should be drawn to what may be lost in terms of democratic potential of voluntary organizations. Darko Nadić (University of Belgrade, Serbia) evaluated the transformation of Serbian environmental policy in the context of EU accession, emphasizing the need for more substantial, not just formal, harmonization of national environmental policy with European policy proposals.

In the second panel of the stream *PAR Policy* Tiina Randma-Liiv (University of Tallinn, Estonia) analyzed the role and the accountability of the OECD in making »tailor-made« recommendations for PA reforms in new democracies. OECD has completed Public Governance Review for several countries, including Estonia, promoting introduction of various performance management tools (performance budgeting, individual performance appraisal). Although OECD recommendations as soft instruments are often not based on the existing scientific literature or on SIGMA's rich *acquis* on SEE countries, they still, when transported in a national state, become »a hard instrument« for the government in the policy-making process. Ivan Koprić (University of Zagreb, Croatia) presented his empirical research on human resources management practices in Western Balkan countries (conducted in 2008 and 2009). The research on performance management has shown serious shortcomings of this model: performance appraisal is still in an early phase of development, the civil services have difficulties in retaining the best staff, there are hindering politicization and corruption, as well as formal and legal approach

to human resource management and insufficient knowledge thereof. Still some positive signs have been found: orientation on regional cooperation, sharing best practices and mutual learning, solid HRM regulation and recognition of soft solutions, such as education and training. The research of 2008 that was focused on the problems of attracting and retaining the best people in the public service provided some conclusions about certain basic HRM problems in the region (politicisation, corruption, etc.) and some promising, positive elements (solid legal regulation, orientation towards long-term measures, etc.).

Panellists on the third panel of the *Analytical/Conceptual* stream explored the position of knowledge and meanings in the policy process. Philippe Zitoun (University of Lyon, France) reviewed the relationship between policy analysis that produces knowledge on policy substance in a prescriptive way and policy analysis focused on policy dynamics in a prospective way. He proposed a new direction with a focus on the discursive practices of policymakers who transform instruments into policies by making sense of the instruments, using this sense to convince each other and build coalitions, and, finally, who use coalitions to legitimate power and impose decisions. Alison Ritter (Drug Policy Modelling Program, UNSW, Australia) analyzed the prospect for evidence based approach in drug policy development in Australia arguing that within this complex policy sector, the role of evidence and science is highly contested with decision-makers rarely accessing academic literature and using research in instrumental and symbolic ways. Dmitry Zaytsev (Higher School of Economics, Russia) explored analytical communities as one of the three types of intellectual communities, together with experts and consultants, active in the policy process. The research in Moscow and three Russian regions has indicated factors affecting the development of analytical communities and revealed three forms of their identity: analytical structures such as think tanks; »analytical spaces« like seminars, forums; and informal intellectual groups.

The third panel of the stream *Policy Analysis in Local Governance* focused on strengthening policy capacity at the local and regional levels in Croatia. Mihovil Škarica (University of Zagreb, Croatia) analyzed the scope of competences of local self-government units as the main indicator of the degree of local autonomy and (de)concentration of political power, with respect to the Charter principle of subsidiarity and recognition of local units (under influence of globalization, Europeanization, market-orientation as well as the NPM and good governance) as coordinators of local economic and societal development. However, in Croatia there are legal, administrative, economic and socio-cultural difficulties for LSG units to

have a clearly defined scope of public competences and to assume modern developmental role. Vedran Đulabić (University of Zagreb, Croatia) explained the importance of strengthening policy capacity for regional policy. Croatia adopted a new institutional and legal framework for regional policy in 2009 and 2010 (Law and Strategy on Regional Development) and needs to develop strategic programming, project management, policy mentoring and evaluation, partnership with the private and non-profit sectors and to diminish the risks arising from fragmentation and weak capacities of local self-government units so they would be able to fully utilize EU financial resources intended for projects of local and regional development.

In the third panel of the stream *PAR policy* modernization of public administration was discussed. Stevan Lilić (University of Belgrade, Serbia) argued that administrative actions in Serbia were no longer seen as »instruments of repression« but more as collaborating in policy making, monitoring certain social sectors, providing public services and promoting development. Key priorities in administrative reform defined in the Serbian Government Strategy of administrative reform are decentralization, depoliticization, professionalization, rationalization, coordination of public policies, control mechanisms, etc. Polona Kovač (University of Ljubljana, Slovenia) presented public administration reforms in Slovenia. As a systematic set of strategies, since 1996, PA reforms aimed at europeanization and modernization in line with rather legalistic interpretation of the NPM. Strategy on Development of Slovenia 2004–2013 emphasizes coordinated approach to modernization, focusing on public administration as an impetus for a competitive national economy and a democracy factor in society. Anamarija Musa and Zdravko Petak (University of Zagreb, Croatia) conducted research focused on detecting various coordination mechanisms and structures, as they strongly affect the effectiveness of policy formulation and policy implementation. Croatia has coordination problems at higher level, as there is still no policy analysis developed for constructing policies, but there are only the beginnings of analysis of policy (systematic comparison of options, impact assessment analyses, etc.).

In the third panel of the stream *Policy Practice in Europe*, Pekka Kettunen (University of Yyväskylä, Finland), Josipa Mihić and Miranda Novak (University of Zagreb, Croatia) and Ivana Jurković (University of Zagreb, Croatia) analyzed the policy work in Finland, Croatia, Hungary and Slovakia while searching for effective, fair and sustainable services in different sectoral policies. While Kettunen found fairness and effectiveness of the Finish health policy in correlation with balanced development of public-private elements in two fold health care system, Mihić and Novak saw



effective implementation of the Croatian prevention policy depended on locally contextualized policy instruments and collaboration in service provision, and Jurkovic emphasized sustainability in relation to demographic change as the main criterion in the assessment and development of the pension systems in Croatia, Hungary and Slovakia. Ivan Lučev (University of Zagreb, Croatia) concluded the panel by suggesting an analytical model for military acquisitions, describing military spending policy as a rational, long-term process with a prevalence of compatible solutions over competitive military build-ups.

In the fourth panel of the *PAR Policy* stream, public administration reform orientations were analyzed. B. Guy Peters (University of Pittsburgh, US) argued that major shift of political control in terms of presidentialization of parliamentary states has taken place after the »death« of NPM in numerous states. Politically-driven strategies and political leaders commanding the public sector constitute one apparent direction of further public administration development. Accordingly, the civil service is becoming the central agent to link political authority and implementation of policies. John Halligan (University of Canberra, Australia) examined several reform approaches with particular reference to the experience of Australia and anglophone countries. NPM reform agendas were bold, systematic and comprehensive, while the post-NPM ones focused on countering the limitations of reforms driven by ideology, but it is more likely that the new reforms will be systemic rather than comprehensive because there is neither fundamental driver nor an explicit reform paradigm to follow in managing new reforms. Yet, expectations for a citizen-oriented, horizontally aligned and governance focused public sector need to be adequately framed. Zarije Seizović (University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina) pointed out that public administration reform should be able to improve general administrative capacity, create rational administrative structures within and between different levels of administration in B&H and entail overall institutional and procedural changes that will affect even the cantonal and municipal administrations. This is why a comprehensive public administration reform in B&H with an emphasis on the modernization of administrative procedure is needed, as the arrangement of four different procedural laws not fully in line with the principle of the rule of law may cause problems regarding legal certainty, transparency and accountability of public administration in B&H.

In the final panel of the conference (in *PAR Policy* stream) Leslie A. Pal and Ian D. Clark (Carleton University, Canada), Dragoljub Kavran (Belgrade, Serbia), Goranka Lalić Novak (Social Sciences Polytechnic, Za-

greb, Croatia) with Gordana Marčetić and Jasmina Džinić (University of Zagreb, Croatia) dealt with the importance of developing administrative education and its content. Although policy and public administration/public management study have a strong professional orientation, many countries including Canada, Serbia and Croatia still need to bridge a gap between academic and professional community, as Leslie Pal showed on Canadian case, suggesting the »core content« of Master PA and public policy programs in that country. Kavran elaborated on the factors creating the modern age of »hyper-uncertainty« and need to strengthen government legitimacy. This requires revitalization of the entire Serbian public sector and administrative education system, whose goals have already been envisaged in the Strategy of Public Administration Reform and the project of Public Administration Professional Development. Lalić Novak presented a research on the education system for public servants in Croatia. The content of public administration programmes and the offered level of education, curricula, the number of students, and the status of each educational institution were analyzed, showing the lack of vertically integrated system of administrative education, a system that has kept strong links with legal studies, and predominantly normative approach in administrative practice. Taking into account the comparative situation in 16 European countries, several proposals for improvement were been made: stronger emphasis on specific public service values in administrative education (accountability, transparency, professionalism, and ethics) and establishment of a public faculty or a university school of public administration with multidisciplinary programs reaching PhD level.

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